Characterization of Higher States of Consciousness in Sant Mat – The Religion of Saints

Synopsis

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1. Introduction

Consciousness is the basis of all existence. It is the essence that leads to awareness and all subjective experience. It is the self-luminous element that is the fundamental building block of reality. It is only through consciousness that we can get insights into the nature of Ultimate Reality and Truth.

"I regard consciousness as fundamental. I regard matter as a derivative from consciousness. We cannot get behind consciousness. Everything that we talk about, everything that we regard as existing, postulates consciousness."… Max Planck, Nobel Laureate in Physics (Planck, 1931).

In Eastern philosophy, consciousness (spirit force) is seen as the underlying essence that connects all beings and phenomena with everything imbued with it to varying degree.

"…*the inference is that there is a substratum and reservoir or source of the spirit force in the creation*" (Misra, 1960).

This underlying essence which is the spirit force, or pure consciousness is the true nature of each individual but this true nature is veiled by the illusions of the material world (external media), and the goal of spiritual practice is to remove these illusions and uncover the true self.

"…*at each step of elimination of the media that surround the spirit, its inherent functions manifest themselves in a highly increasing progression, and then eventually the spirit force comes out unalloyed as the source of prime energy, intelligence, and bliss*" (Misra, 1960).

The true self or soul is distinct from the physical body, mind, and emotions, and it is eternal and unchanging (Vasu 1905). It is believed that the soul has a direct connection with the Divine, and that the spiritual path involves cultivating this connection through meditation and inner spiritual practices. This concept is well explained by the following verse.

आत्मानग्वं रथिनं विद्धि शरीरं रथमेव तु।
बुद्धिं तु सारथिं विद्धि मनः प्रग्रहमेव च।
इन्द्रियाणि हयानाहुर्विषयांस्तेषु गोचरान्।
आत्मेन्द्रियमनोयुक्तं भोक्तेत्याहुर्मनीषिणः।।

ātmānagvaṁ rathinaṁ viddhi śharīraṁ rathameva tu
buddhiṁ tu sārathiṁ viddhi manaḥ pragrahameva cha
indriyāṇi hayānāhurviṣhayānsteṣhu gocharān
ātmendriyamanoyuktaṁ bhoktetyāhurmanīṣhiṇaḥ

Katha Upanishad (1.3.3-4) [v21]

In this "Chariot Parable", the human body is compared to a chariot, the intellect to the charioteer, the mind to the reins, and the senses to the horses. The passenger on the chariot is the soul, which is the true self of the individual. Lord Krishna further explains that the soul the true self, is distinct from the mind, senses and body. The soul is eternal and unchanging, while the mind and body are subject to change and decay (Chinmayanand, 2016).

Consciousness permeates the entire creation, which is experienced on self-realization

अहं वा सर्वभूतेषु सर्वभूतान्यथो मयि ।
इति ज्ञानं तथैतस्य न त्यागो न ग्रहो लयः ॥ ४ ॥

ahaṃ vā sarvabhūteṣu sarvabhūtānyatho mayi |
iti jñānaṃ tathaitasya na tyāgo na graho layaḥ || 4 ||

(Ashtavaka Gita 6,4,)

Alternatively, I am in all beings, and all beings are in me. To know this is knowledge, and then there is neither renunciation, acceptance or cessation of it (Saraswati 2020).

The human form is the most advanced life form on the earth, which is endowed with a body and mind that are necessary to attain self-realization, i.e., the purest state of consciousness and ultimate reality. It is a perfect microcosm of the macrocosm (Satsangi 2013). It is said that:

Yatha Samasthi Srishti Tatha Manav Vyashti Srishti
(As in Macrocosm, so in Human Microcosm)

and

Yatha Sachkhande Tatha Brahmande
Yatha Brahmande Tatha Pinde

(As in Purely Spiritual Region, so in Region of Universal Mind)
(As in Region of Universal Mind, so in Region of Universal Matter or Physical Universe).

Nature has endowed the human form with potentialities for full spiritual growth. The higher faculties can be developed through yoga-meditation, which involves focusing attention at different nerve centres in the body, using mantras, forms and postures and practicing a pious lifestyle. There are different forms of meditations that have evolved over time in different cultures and practiced to attain specific states of consciousness (Saligram 1948, 1985 Misra 1960, Satsangi 2010 a,b, Singh 1959, Swarup 1936) (Satsangi 2016).

"So, by internal repetition of real Holy words or Names one can only collect together, at the focus of

the eyes, the spirit which is diffused all over the body, but by internally hearing the sounds thereof, one can actually hold communion with and gradually approach the centres whence these Holy sounds or Names emanate" – (Saligram 1948).

Ancient scriptures have detailed expositions of the purpose of life, the different states of consciousness and the method to attain self-realization. The *Mandukya Upanishad (Agama Prakarana)* describes four aspects of the self: (Gambhiranand 2004).

1 **Visva/Jagrat** – the waking state in consciousness is sensorial through the five senses, five organs of action and five vital breaths.

ज०ागरितस्थानो बहिष्प्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः

स्थूलभुग्वैश्वानरः प्रथमः पादः (I.3)

This verse describes the first aspect or state of consciousness, which is the waking state. It is characterized by external awareness, possessing seven limbs (sense organs) and nineteen mouths (speech channels). In this state, the individual experiences the gross objects of the world. This aspect of consciousness is referred to as Vaiśvānara.

2 **Taijas/Swapna** – the dream state which is a fabrication of the physical world. It is the internal consciousness and has impressions from the waking state but is free from the restraints of the physical world.

स०्वप्नस्थानोऽन्तःप्रज्ञः सप्ताङ्ग एकोनविंशतिमुखः

प्रविविक्तभुक् तैजसो द्वतीयः पादः (I.4)

This verse describes the second aspect or state of consciousness, which is the dreaming state. It is characterized by internal awareness, possessing seven limbs (sense organs) and nineteen mouths (speech channels). In this state, the individual experiences subtle objects in the realm of dreams. This aspect of consciousness is referred to as Taijasa.

3 **Prajna/ Susupti** – the deep sleep state is a state of bliss but is a temporary state and one keeps falling back into the dream and waking state.

यत्र सुप्तो न कञ्चन कामं कामयते

न कञ्चन स्वयं पश्यति तत्सुषुप्तम् ।
सुषुप्तस्थान एकीभूतः प्रज्ञानघन एवानन्दमयो

ह्यानन्दभुक् चेतोमुखः प्राज्ञस्तृतीयः पादः (I.5)

4 **Turiya** – this is a ***transcendental*** state of meditation where one does not fall back into the other three states. They are known as *jivanmukta* and even while awake they are aloof from the world and drawn inwards.

अन्यथा गृह्णतः स्वप्नो निद्रा तत्त्वमजानतः।

विपर्यासे तयोः क्षीणे तुरीयं पदमश्नुते॥ (I.15)

This verse highlights the importance of recognizing the illusory nature of dreams and understanding the true nature of deep sleep. By transcending these two states and realizing their impermanent and limited nature, one can attain the state of Turiya, which is beyond the three conventional states of waking, dreaming, and deep sleep.

5. **Turiyatita -** Vedanta reveals a fifth state known as *Turiyatita*, a state of absolute non-dual consciousness (Samnyasa Upanishad), in which there is no distinction between the individual self and Brahman. In Turiyatita, the self has transcended all limitations and illusions, and is fully united with the ultimate reality. This was also known as the state of supreme consciousness and is known as *Nirguna* (without attributes, thus is the true self).

तुर्यातीताख्योपनिषद्वेद्यं यत् परमाक्षरम् |
तत्तुर्यातीत चिन्मात्रं स्वमात्रं चिन्तयेऽन्वहम् ॥

turyātītākhyopaniṣadvedyaṃ yat paramākṣaram |
tatturyātīta chinmātraṃ svamātraṃ chintaye'nvaham ||

The knowledge that is to be obtained from the Upanishads regarding *Turiyatita*, which is beyond the fourth state of consciousness (*Turiya*), is that it is nothing but pure consciousness itself. Meditate on this ultimate reality and on your own true nature. (Dikshit 1929).

2. Sant Mat Philosophy

Sant Mat is a religious movement that began during the 13^{th} – 17^{th} century CE in the Indian subcontinent. Since the advent of Sant Kabir Sahab, there have been a number of great Saints that include, Guru Nanak

Sahab, Dadu Dayal Sahab, Jagjivan Sahab, Paltu Sahab, Tulsi Sahab (of Hathras), and Soamiji Maharaj, the August Founder of the Radhasoami Faith and His successors, whose teachings are referred to as the Religion of Saints. There is uniformity in their teachings of Sant Mat that emphasize the importance of Satnam-the true spiritual name or sound, Satguru-the enlightened Adept in communion with the Supreme Being and Satsang-His association both internal during meditation and external company. (Johnson 1997, Juergensmeyer 1995, Kulshreshtha 2014).

Sant Mat considers the human form as a perfect microcosm of the macrocosm that possesses the necessary faculties to be in communion with higher states of consciousness that correspond to different macrocosmic states. Sant Mat defines the macrocosm comprising of three grand divisions, namely, the Region of Gross Matter (Pind Loka), the Region of the Universal Mind (Brahmanda) and the Pure Spiritual Region (Nirmal Chetan Desh). (Misra 1960, Satsangi 2009, 2010a, b, Swarup Vol.1,2 1954,1957, Singh 1959, White Paper 2011).

As explained by Most Revered Prem Saran Satsangi Sahab, The Eighth Spiritual Adept of the Radhasoami Faith:

"*The system model we have come up with based on the first-person phenomenology, broadly speaking, it has three major sub-systems. Apart from the physical universe (the Region of Universal Matter), in the macrocosm, it envisages the Region of Universal Mind and the Region of Universal Spirit*." – (Satsangi, 2012).

The transcendental states of consciousness are higher states of consciousness which are those states or experiences that go beyond the limits of ordinary perception or understanding. It is often associated with the notion of "transcending" the physical limitations of the individual self to reach a higher state of consciousness or reality, which according to Sant Mat philosophy correspond to the region of Brahmanda, i.e., the Second Grand Division which is the Region of the Universal Mind. The Ultra-transcendental states of Consciousness correspond to higher states of consciousness associated with the pure spiritual realm that correspond to the Nirmal Chetan Desh, i.e., the Third Grand Division, which is the region of the Pure Spirit.

Sant Mat highlights the meditational practice of *Surat Shabd Yoga*, which is the union of spirit with Shabda, i.e., the spiritual sound current for attaining higher states of consciousness. (Misra 1960,

Satsangi 2009, 2010a, b, Swarup Vol.1,2 1954, Singh 1959).

3. Characterization of Higher States of Consciousness as Revealed in Sant Mat

The Upanishads reveal hierarchical levels of consciousness, namely, Jagrat, Swapna, Susupti, Turiya and Turiyatita. However, the *Sants* of Sant Mat have described higher states of consciousness beyond these and clarified that salvation can only be achieved on achieving higher consciousness states corresponding to the Nirmal Chetan Desh.

Sants have provided detailed exposition on all aspects of consciousness that includes its origin, nature, and dynamics in common Hindi language that can be understood by masses and coming generations over centuries. A deeper analysis reveals aspects of human perception that appears to get corroborated by modern science, especially quantum physics, for instance, indeterminacy, superposition, duality, entanglement and teleportation. Sants in the Radhasomai Faith, Dayalbagh, have also provided a scientific description of the spiritual revelations in terms of modern scientific theories based on abstract mathematics (Satsangi 2012- 2016, Roy, 2005, 2014-2018; Dayal et al., 2020, Bhasin et al. 2016, 2017, Pyari et al. 2016, 2017, Saran et al., 2016, 2019, Kozlowski 2016).

A study of the teachings of Sant Mat reveals various characteristic features of the different states of consciousness during meditation, in terms of the corresponding higher macrocosmic regions, characteristic color, refulgence, sound (progressing from a bell, to conch, to percussions and then to stringed instruments, wind instruments flute, Indian snake charmer's lute and sounds not represented by any physical instrument), bliss, unity experience, love and compassion. (Misra 1960, Satsangi 2009, 2010a, b, Swarup Vol.1,2 1954, Singh 1959, White Paper 2011).

This can also be best explained in the words of Sant Tulsi Sahab, wherein he states that those Saints who have reached the highest realms of consciousness, all speak the same language and have described these states in a uniform manner (Tulsi 2007):

कहै तुलसी तुम सुनिये काना । संत शब्द का करौ बखाना ॥
दादू मीरा नाभा भाई । नानक दरिया सूर सुनाई ॥
अरु कबीर पुनि भाखा भाई । और अनेक संत बिधि गाई ॥
जो जो संत अगम पर धाये । जिन जिन साखी शब्द सुनाये ॥
संत चरन रज तुलसीदासा दासा । कछु कछु भाखा अगम बिलासा ॥

Through a study of the teachings of Saints (Shabdas composed by them), one can ascertain the nature

of consciousness and uniform characterization of different states of consciousness. Some selected verses that describe the states and characteristic features in words highlighted are as follows: -

3.1 Sant Kabir Sahab

Kabir Sahab was a prominent Indian Sant in the 15th century (Banerjee 2020, Hess 2015, Jhingram 1997, Manik 2019, Friedlander 2015, McGregor 1993). Kabir Sahab in his verses, clearly elaborated upon regions beyond Brahmand, (Kabir 1905, 2000, 2019).

चंद सूर एकै घर लाओ, **सुषमन सेती** ध्यान लगाओ।
तिरवेनी के संघ समाओ, मोर उतर चल पारा है॥११॥
त्रिकुटी महल मे विद्या सारा, घनहर गरजें बजे **नगारा।**
लाल बरन सूरज उजियारा, **चतुरकंवल** मँझार सब्द **ओंकारा** है॥१५॥
साध सोई जिन यह गढ़ लीन्हा, **नौं दरवाज़े** परगट चीन्हा।
दसवाँ खेल जाय जिन दीन्हा, जहां कुलुफ़ रहा मारा है॥१६॥
आगे सेत **सुन्न** है भाई, **मानसरोवर** पैठी अन्हाई।
हँसन मिलि हंसा होई जाई, मिले जो **अमी** अहारा है॥१७॥

Kabir Sahab discloses that it is through sound that one spiritually ascends and by concentrating on *Sushmana*, the subtle channel, which is a confluence of three, may one break free. In the mansion of Trikuti is the essence of knowledge, The drum of prosperity thunders with joyous sound, The red-hued sun shines radiantly, In the lake of the four lotuses, the sound of 'Onkar' resonates." The true seeker is then able to ascend from Trikuti to Sunn region in Mansarovar, he gets purified and becomes a hansa, i.e., a pure spiritual swan, in the company of other hansas.

3.2 Sant Guru Nanak Sahab

Sant Guru Nanak Sahab the August Founder of the Sikh religion, a spiritual leader and a visionary with a divine mission, spoke of "Ek Onkar" in his teachings. "Ek Onkar" is a central concept in Sikhism and is at the beginning of the Sikh holy scripture, the Guru Granth Sahib. It is a phrase in Punjabi that translates to "One Creator" or "One God". (Fenich 2008, 2020, Nanak, 2023, Shapiro 2003, Fenech 2008, 2020, Singh 1969), In the following verses (Nanak 2017):

आसणु सोधि निरालमु बहे। **पंच तत्तु** काया महिं दहे॥
अरचे के घरि परचे जाय। **त्रिकुटी** फूटी **सुन्नि** समाय॥
ससीआरू फूटा कवल विगासु। **त्रिकुटी** फूटि निज घरि वासु॥
नाभ **कवलु पवनु** अरंभु। मूल पवनु नाभ अस्थम्भु॥

बंक नाड़ि रसु भेदु न पाय। भणति नानक जे निज घरि जाय॥
इड़ा पिंगुला सुषमना तन बुधि। तीन तपे सहंसा कि सुधि॥
त्रिगुण त्यागि **चौथा पदु** जाणे। **नौं** घरि ढूँढ़ि **दशवें** घरि आणे॥
निरंजन जोति शब्द सिरि शोरू। एकोही आपि दूजा नहीं होरू॥
ता का न अंतु, न पारावारु। **अगम** अगाधि बिअंतु अपारु॥

Guru Nanak Sahab states that through the process of meditation we are able to transcend from the region of Trikuti to Sunn and by concentrating on the subtle energy channels within the body, that is Ida, Pingala, Sushmana – we can leave behind the third and reach the 4th region where there is an immaculate brilliant light. We search the nine doors to arrive at the tenth door. The Agam Loka is endless and eternal.

3.3 Sant Paltu Sahab

Sant Paltu Sahab who lived in the 18th century in the northern India was a prominent figure in the Sant Mat tradition (Sajjan 2014), who also emphasized the importance of inner spiritual experiences and the attainment of self-realization through the practice of meditation and ethical living. In the following verses (Paltu 2018):

संत जोग एकौ नहिं जाना, ता तें भटका खाया ॥ ३ ॥
ईंगला पिंगला सुखमन नाड़ी, **अनहद** डंक जगाया ।
त्रिकुटी सुन्न मद्ध के ऊपर, **सोहंग** शब्द समाया ॥ ४ ॥
जलावंत इक सिंध **अगम** है, **सुखमन** सूरत लाया।

Sant Paltu Sahab explains that the one who does not know the Sant, wanders around and suffers. The Ida, Pingala, and Sukhmana Nadis awaken the Anhad (unstruck) sound within. Above the Trikuti and Sunn, the Sohang Shabad (a meditative mantra) resonates. The single, infinite reservoir or ocean of Agam Loka is unfathomable, but one can attain it by making the spirit entity enter the Sukhmana Nadi. He describes the higher state of consciousness where the sounds of 'flute' and 'Sohang' resound after piercing through the 'Tenth Door' through Sushumna Nadi which is also called Sukhmana Nadi: (Paltu 1939, Paltu 2014).

3.4 Sant Jagjivan Sahab

Jagjivan Sahab's teachings were deeply rooted in the Sant Mat tradition, and he emphasized the importance of inner transformation and purification of the soul through meditation and selfless service. He taught that the ultimate goal of human life is to realize one's true nature and unite with the divine, and he provided practical guidance on how to achieve this through meditation and other spiritual

practices. (Jagjivan 1982). In the following verses (White Paper 2011):

जाके लगी **अनहद** तान हो, निरबान **निगुन** नाम की॥१॥
ज़िकर करके सिखर हेरे फिकर **रारंकर** की॥२॥
जाके लगी अजपा गगन झलके **जोत** देख निशान की॥३॥
मध्य **मुरली** बाजे बाएं **किंगरी सारंगी॥४॥**
दहने जो **घंटा संख** बाजे गैब धुन झंकार की॥५॥
अकह की यह कथा न्यारी सीखा नाही आन है॥६॥
जगजीवन प्राण सोघ के हे मिल रे **सतनाम** है॥७॥

Jagjivan Sahab explains that when the unstruck melody is struck, the name of the formless God resonates. By chanting the meditative mantra 'Rarankar', one can experience inner peace and tranquility. In the midst of it, the flute and sarangi play, Filling the air with melodious tunes. The ringing of bells and conch shells resounds, creating a beautiful rhythm. The story of the unspoken cannot be taught, it can only be experienced and realized. The realm of spirituality, represented by Satnam, is where this essential truth can be found.

3.5 Sant Tulsi Sahab

Tulsi Sahab of Hathras's teachings were focused on the inner journey of the soul towards spiritual enlightenment (Sethi 1978, Singh 2007). He emphasized the importance of meditation, devotion, and selfless service in achieving spiritual growth and inner transformation. According to his teachings, the true purpose of human life is to realize the divine within oneself and to attain liberation from the cycle of birth and death. In the following verses (Tulsi 2007).

दीदा फूल झूल दिन राती। **त्रिकुटी** चढ़ि यहि भांति हो।
बिधि बायें **पिगला** गति केरी। **इँगला** दहिने फेरी हो॥४॥
चंद सूर दम दम बस आवा। **सुखमनि** चटक चढ़ावा हो।
बंक नाल पल पल नल खोली। अति अजपा नहिं बोली हो॥५॥
ओहँग तत **सोहँग** मत जानी। पवन सब्द सँध आनि हो।

Tulsi Sahab explains different levels of consciousness at different locations in the human body and the deities associated with them. Beginning with the four-petalled lotus at the muladhara chakra, i.e., symbolizing the four currents, where the abode of Ganpati is contemplated. It is said that the lotus with six petals is situated there, where Lord Brahma resides. Eight petalled lotus is present with different names, where Lord Vishnu sits on a throne. In the heart, there are twelve petals of various methods and accomplishments, and it is called Mount Kailash, the abode of Lord Shiva. In the thousand-petal lotus, the pure formless God is seen, where the noise of the mind is silenced. Now tell the secrets of the saints,

where the lotus is above all others. There are nine lakh (900,000) lotuses beyond the realm, and only the four petals surpass them. Beyond that lies the Agam region, where the river of nectar flows. Beyond that is the abode of the Supreme Lord, where the soul resides in its true home.

3.6 Sant Soamiji Maharaj (Shri Shiv Dayal Singh Sahab)

Sant Soamiji Maharaj, the August Founder of the Radhasoami Faith, was born on the midnight of Monday, the 24th of August 1818 A.D. in Mohalla Pannigali, Agra. Sant Soamiji Maharaj mercifully described in unprecedented detail the different states of consciousness and the path to salvation, in both Prose and Poetry form. He emphasized the practice of Surat-Shabda-Yoga with the following three aspects (Singh 1938, 1959):

- Sumiran: Repetition of the holy name Ra-Dha-Sva-Aah-Mi
- Dhyan: Contemplation of the Holy Form of the Living Sant Satguru
- Bhajan: listening internally to spiritual sound currents.

He mercifully revealed the divine name Ra-Dha-Sva-Aah-Mi, which signifies the following:

राधास्वामी नाम, सिफ़त करूँ इस नाम की।
सुनो कान दे आन भिन भिन वर्णन करूँ॥१॥
पाँच अक्षर आये हिन्दी मे। ज़बाँ फ़ारसी अक्षर दस में॥२॥
पाँच शब्द का भेद बतावें। दस मुकाम को ले पहुचावें॥३॥

Radhasoami is the name, let us praise this name. Listen attentively and I will describe it to you. It is a five-letter word in Hindi, And ten letters in Persian. Let me explain the meaning of the five words and take you to the ten stages of realization.

The Five Names (Paanch Shabd) are: (1). Niranjan, (2), Om, (3) Rarang, (4) Sohang, and (5) Sat. The above verse alludes the 10 planes of consciousness (Das Mukam): (1) Sahas Dal Kamal, (2) Trikuti, (3) Sunn, (4) Mahasunn, (5) Bhanwar Gufa, (6) Sat Loka, (7) Anami Loka, (8) Alakh Loka, (9) Agam Loka, and (10) Radhasoami. (Singh 1938).

He mercifully reveals the various states of consciousness mentioned above and their respective characteristic features in great detail in the following Shabda (Singh 1938):

तब स्वामी ने बचन सुनाया। कोटिन अरब **सूर उजियारा।**

मारग का यों भेद लखाया।।१५५।। **अलख पुरुष** छबि अद्भुत धरा।।१६६।।

पांच नाम का सुमिरन करो। तहँ से **अगम** लोक को चली।

श्याम सेट में सूरत धरो।।१५६।। **अगम पुरुष** से जाकर मिली।।१६७।।

प्रथमे सुनो गगन में **बाजा।** खरबन **सूर** चाँद परकाशा।

घंटा संख छाँट धुन गाजा।।१५७।। धुन का वहां की **अगम** बिलासा।।१६८।।

सहस कँवल दल जोत लखाई । धुन का वर्णन कैसे गाऊँ।

बंकनाल में जाय समाई।।१५८।। जग में कोई दृष्टान्त न पाऊँ।।१६९।।

बंक पार **त्रिकुटी** में गई । ता के आगे रहत **अनामी** ।

ओंकार और राद धुन लई।।१५९।। निज घर संतन बरना स्वामी।।१७०।।

आगे पहुंची **सुन्न** मंझार। सुन कर सूरत अति हरखानी।

ररंकार धुन सुनी पुकार।।१६०।। चलो सुवामी मैं सब जानी।।१७१।।

किंगरी और **सारंगी** सुनी। बिन सतगुरु कोइ भेद न पावे।

मान सरोवर चढ़ चढ़ गुनी।।१६१।। सतगुरु सो यह देश लखावे।।१७२।।

आगे **महासुन्न** मैदाना। सतगुरु की महिमा अति भारी।

जहाँ चार धुन तिमिर समाना।।१६२।। कोई न जाने पच पच हारी ।।१७३।।

भँवर गुफा ता ऊपर देखी। जा पर कृपा दृष्टि वे करें।

सोहं बंसी बजती पेखी।।१६३।। वह जाने और निश्चय धरे ।।१७४।।

ता के परे धाम सत नामा। कोइ कोइ जीव करें विश्वासा।

बीन बजे **सतलोक** ठिकाना।।१६४।। कर प्रतीत वे धारें आसा।।१७५।।

सुनत सुरत फिर आगे चढ़ी। संत बचन जो सच्चा मानें।

अलख लोक में जा कर धरी।।१६५।। इस बानी को सो सच जानें।।१७६।।

4 Motivation

A literature survey shows that there has not been an exhaustive systematic study of the nature and higher states of consciousness in the teachings of prominent Saints of Sant Mat. The innumerable Shabdas, i.e., holy hymns composed by these Saints reveal the detailed characteristic features of different states of

consciousness which are important to understand and attain by spiritual seekers in their quest for self-realization and salvation. A preliminary study of their teachings over a long period of nearly a millennium shows continuity and uniformity in the description of experiences and nomenclature of the different states of consciousness in terms of locations of nerve centres In the human body, the sounds, refulgence, bliss and associated deities. It highlights the fact that these states of consciousness are repeatable and reproducible.

The proposed research work aims to make important contribution to this important aspect. The proposed study would be useful for the following:

- Understanding the nature and uniform descriptions of higher states of consciousness by different Saints can help to validate the authenticity of these experiences.
- It can assist spiritual practitioners in better comprehending and experiencing these states of consciousness during meditation.
- Understanding the methodology for attaining these states of consciousness in the present time and correlations with advancements in modern science to understand consciousness through abstract mathematics, quantum phenomena, cognitive science and neuro-theology.

5 Objectives

The objectives of the proposed thesis are outlined as follows:

- To study the teachings of prominent Saints of the Sant Mat that includes Sant Kabir Sahab, Sant Guru Nanak Sahab, Sant Paltu Sahab, Sant Sant Jagjivan Sahab, Sant Tulsi Sahab and Sant Soamiji Maharaj (Shiv Dayal Singh Sahab).
- To study the nature of consciousness in terms of modern scientific understanding of quantum physics and neurotheology.
- To identify the characteristic features of the transcendental states of consciousness in the teachings of different Saints.
- To identify descriptions of ultra-transcendental states of consciousness in the teachings of different Saints.
- To carry out a comparative analysis of the descriptions and identify uniform features and

characterization of entire spectrum of consciousness by different Saints.

6 Methodology

The methodology to achieve the proposed objectives is as follows:

- The teachings of the identified Saints in the form of Shabdas will be collected.
- A detailed study of the Discourses of prominent Saints will be carried out and the nature and different states of consciousness with different features will be identified, which would include, locations of nerve centres, deities, experience, colour, spiritual sound currents simulated by different instruments, from initial to transcendental and ultra-transcendental states of consciousness.
- A detailed analysis of the nature of consciousness and its dynamics will be carried out based on modern scientific theories with a focus on quantum physics and neurotheology.
- An elaborate comparative chart will be prepared on the above basis to identify the common and uniform features of different states of consciousness.
- An effort will be made to prepare the complete spectrum of consciousness based on Sant Mat teachings.

7 Chapter Schema

The proposed chapters of the Thesis are as outlined below:

Chapter I - Introduction

a. Spiritual Consciousness

b. Sant Mat Perspective –

- Macrocosm within Microcosm
- Three Grand Divisions
- Transcendental and Ultra–Transcendental Consciousness
- Surat Shabd Yoga

c. Literature Review

Chapter II – Nature of Consciousness and its Dynamics

Chapter III – Comparative Analysis of Characteristic Features of Different States of Consciousness by Prominent Saints in Sant Mat

1. Sant Kabir Sahab
2. Sant Guru Nanak Sahab
3. Sant Paltu Sahab
4. Sant Jagjivan Sahab
5. Sant Tulsi Sahab
6. Sant Soamiji Maharaj

Chapter IV – The Complete Spectrum of Consciousness

- Modern Scientific Perspective

Chapter V – The Attainment of Higher Consciousness through Meditation (Surat Shabd Yoga), Devotion (Bhakti Marg) and Selfless Service (सेवा)

Chapter VI – Conclusion

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